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Ingo PLAG, *Word-Formation in English (2nd Edition)*

Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, 2018, 245 pages

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Ingo Plag
Word-Formation in English, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-316-62329-9, Price: £30.99, 245 pages.

1. General observations

1 Ingo Plag is Professor of English Linguistics at Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf. He has published articles in specialized journals like *Linguistics*, *Language* or *English Language and Linguistics* and in works like the *Yearbook of Morphology* [2001], *Word-Formation: An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe* [2016] or *Word Knowledge and Word Usage: A Cross-Disciplinary Guide to the Mental Lexicon* [2017]. He is the author of *Morphological Productivity: Structural Constraints in English Derivation* [1999]. *Word-Formation in English* was first published in 2003. The phrase "Word-Formation" emphasizes the author's aim, which is to specify from a morphological point of view the main processes at work in the creation of words.

2 In the Preface to the Second Edition (p. xi), the author, who dedicates his book to his team, states the reasons why an update was required:

> In particular, the work with Laurie Bauer and Shelly Lieber on *The Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology*, published in 2013, showed me that certain concepts and theoretical notions needed to be reconceived and modernized in the light of the new evidence that had become available by that time.

3 In the Preface to the First Edition (p. xiii-xiv), which has also been included, he already mentioned the help he had received from his colleagues and the hints that had been provided by his students. The book was dedicated to his "academic teacher, mentor, and friend, Professor Rüdiger Zimmerman". You also learn that his main source of inspiration was "a review article on Katamba's morphology textbook" written in 1999 by Joel N. Nevis and John T. Stonham. His belief is that "everyone is a linguist, even if it is sometimes hard work (for both teachers and students) to unearth this talent".

4 The new version of *Word-Formation in English* will be of interest to you if you wish to study one of the main linguistic processes which come into play in any language, whether you be a learner who wants to acquire the basic notions of morphology or a specialist whose desire it is read about the latest research. If you are willing to further your knowledge, other works belonging to the same series, "Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics", deal with topics pertaining to domains such as semantics, syntax, phonetics and phonology, dialectology and varieties of English, pragmatics and grammar, language acquisition, the construction of meaning, as well as the main theories.

2. Linguistic framework

5 The author makes it clear that the approach chosen, whose goals are explicitly practical, does not rely on a specific linguistic theory, but favours the references which seem the most appropriate according to the topic at issue. Readers are thus invited to discover the latest findings and select the points of view they like best, which means that they cannot feel constrained by any analytical bias.

3. Synopsis of the book

6 From pages 1 to 3, the "Introduction: What This Book Is about and How It Can Be Used" states the topic straight away and gives all necessary instructions to readers. While taking stock of the universal situation in which words are taken for granted, the author wonders about the creativity at work in "word-formation". He also ponders on the nature of the relationship between simple words and complex words. The intended readership is mainly of undergraduate level since all the explanations are provided for the student to become autonomous in their "own analyses of English (or other languages') complex words" (p. 1). As no particular theoretical framework has been selected, the use of the textbook depends on what the teacher, student or general reader is looking for.

7 There are three parts: chapters 1 to 3 correspond to the definitions of "basic notions", chapters 4 to 6 are descriptive and deal with "different kinds of word-formation processes in English" while chapter 7 is focused on "the role of phonology in word-formation and the nature of word-formation rules". The introduction ends on a humorous note with the mention of the term t*eachees*, which arouses the reader's curiosity: you will undoubtedly want to find out more about this noun and ask yourself whether it is "a possible word of English" or not. Starting with an example, a concrete one, is a good way of concluding this brief introduction, which is remarkable for its clarity: no jargon is used, essential definitions are already given so you understand that

more complex paragraphs are to be found afterwards. The author's point is to make a good impression on the reader, who hopefully will not be deterred from going on studying each chapter.

8 The only question you might ask yourself is why the refusal to choose a particular theoretical framework has not been justified from the outset: is it because according to Ingo Plag none really achieves its aims or relies on precise enough concepts? Or is it on account of his wish to let practice prevail over theory so that readers might be trained in carrying out linguistic analyses? Does he think that it is better to propose several approaches which, to some extent, complement one another or does he prefer to give you the opportunity to select the one you like best? In which case, you may deduce that open-mindedness might be the reason for such an absence.

9 The seven chapters, which go from the general to the particular, from the most accessible to the most complex data, feature in the table of contents on pages vii, viii and ix. They all follow the same pattern: an "outline" at the top of the page announces key definitions, which are explained in detail in the multiple analyses that are carried out before a "summary" is included at the end. A few lines on "further reading" are then added as well as some exercises adapted to the basic and advanced levels. Thanks to that overall layout, it is easy to understand how the transitions operate from one chapter to the next and all the more so since the logical links between the various linguistic issues are obvious: the presentation of "Basic Concepts" (chap. 1) leads to "Studying Complex Words" (chap. 2), "Productivity and the Mental Lexicon" (chap. 3), "Affixation" (chap. 4) , "Derivation without Affixation" (chap. 5) and "Compounding" (chap. 6), to end with "Theoretical Issues: Modeling Word-Formation" (chap. 7). The telegraphic style used in the heads and subheads, which are made up of one word or more, enables readers to immediately get a clear idea of what the textbook is all about. It soon becomes manifest too that theory is not the main focus, the last chapter serving as a conclusion since "Answer Key to Exercises" is to be found right after the summary of Chapter 7.

10 The 'References' section covers nine pages, but it is not so long as to disorientate readers. The selection that is presented is a medley of books, articles in paper format and online articles in alphabetical order with an obvious emphasis on the English language, especially "General American English" (p. 2), and mostly on written English. It may be regrettable that the great variety of resources you have at your disposal has not been divided into categories, either according to the nature of the reference, to the thematic content or to the degree of specialization involved so that a beginner and a specialist might have known which items are most suitable for them. A distinction could have been established between firstly general introductions to morphology reflecting various schools of thought as well as their theoretical frameworks and secondly more specialized material, to end with the most highly complex works.

Another possibility might have been to introduce them chapter by chapter since themes have been predetermined in their succession and all the more so because bibliographical advice is given at the end of each chapter of the book.

11 Nevertheless, the comparative studies between British and American English or between Italian, German and other languages are of interest, as well as the fact that phonology has been taken into account so that oral English has not been forgotten (cf. Mari Ostendorf, Patti Price and Stefanie Shattuck-Hufnagel, for instance). Behavioural studies (cf. Robert A. Rescorla and Allen R. Wagner) as well as those focused on

"theories of associative learning in animals" (cf. John M. Pearce and Mark E. Bouton) have also been added so that, all in all, you are provided with a wealth of seminal works.

12 The three-page Subject Index is very useful if you are looking for a definition, as are the two-page Affix Index and the two-page Author Index. We can guess that it is for clarity's sake that the Affix Index has not been included in the Subject Index. That way, it is easier to flip through the book and find a precise reference.

4. Detailed presentation of each chapter

4.1. Chapter 1

13 If you are what the author calls "a novice", you would be well-advised to read the first chapter, which is the shortest one. Otherwise it will be difficult for you to understand the others. The author establishes very useful distinctions between crucial linguistic terms and resorts to visual props like tree diagrams or words above and below curly brackets to help you navigate through the transitions, temporary conclusions and numbered examples. The latter illustrate key rules and exceptions, the special cases being naturally of particular interest.

14 Yet, what is a little confusing is the use of the term "grammatical word" for *walk* in (a) "Franky walked to Hollywood every morning.", (b) "You'll never walk alone.", (c) "Patricia had a new walking stick." in Exercise 1.1 page 18 and in the Answer Key page 198. What Ingo Plag means by such a phrase is nevertheless explained there: "walked in (a) is a grammatical word because it is a verb that is specified for tense, in this case past second person". This categorization does not correspond to the one normally used in phonology for instance where "grammatical words" are defined as tools in contrast to lexical words which,like the verb *walk*, bear informative content.

15 The phonological transcription [oʊ] instead of /əʊ/ for <o> in NATO is derived from the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* like all the other transcriptions as the author writes page 8, but it is not the typical IPA one. This is a recurrent phenomenon throughout the book. What is more surprising is the following statement: "[bi] could refer to two different 'words,' e.g. bee and be" (p. 8). In fact, <bee> is usually transcribed as /'bi:/ and only the strong form of be would correspond to it.

16 The sentence "Or consider the fact that only words (and groups of words), but no smaller units, can be moved to a different position in the sentence" (p. 8) is not always true because it is only the case for some words. For instance, we cannot say "*the house big" although some attributive adjectives like "present" can be placed after the noun. The assertion "in 'yes/no' questions, the auxiliary verb does not occur in its usual position but is moved to the beginning of the sentence" (p. 8) is a little confusing too because it is based on the premise that the assertion is the starting-point. The deduction "Hence the auxiliary verb must be a word. Thus syntactic criteria can help to determine the wordhood of a given entity." (p. 8) also seems to be misleading: does it mean that as a consequence a lexical verb, which can never be put before the subject, would not be a word?

17 The comparative analyses between English and German offer you the possibility to understand better the specificity of the former while the variety of language-users

ranging from the illiterate to the experts is also taken into account. Hence, tangible facts inevitably prevail over assumptions and valid criteria are set. That is why the phonological, semantic, and syntactic approaches are preferred to "orthography only" as is the one based on the "internal integrity rule" (p. 5). The opposition between written and oral English, which both allow the speaker to reach for particular stylistic effects, also plays a role in the description of compounds or creations, which are obviously the main issue.

18 The definitions of lexemes, homophones, morphologically complex words, and morphemes whether bound or free, are followed by the distinction which is established between roots, stems or bases, between roots in general and bound roots in particular. The terms "affix", "prefix", "suffix" and "infix" are made clear while the study of derivatives implies having a look at the "mechanisms that regulate the distribution of affixes and bases" and determine the "combinatorial properties of morphemes" (p. 11). "Concatenation" vs. "non-concatenative ways to form morphologically complex words" then come under scrutiny as does the process of "conversion, zero-suffixation or transposition" (p. 12), which takes place for instance between noun and verb (eg. *walk*). You will learn more about truncation, clipping (p. 12), blends (p. 13), acronyms and abbreviations (p. 13) as well as about the contrast between inflection and derivation (p. 13-17), which respectively involve word-forms as opposed to lexemes. "Non-transparent formations" are also at stake within derivational morphology as are the restrictions applying to the possible combinations.

4.2. Chapter 2

19 The morpheme, which is "a unit of form and meaning" (p. 20), was studied in the previous chapter, but now the author wishes to focus on the theoretical "problems of the mapping of form and meaning" (p. 20). The aim is to differentiate a derived word from a complex word as opposed to a simplex word (p. 26), and from "a compositional linguistic expression" (p. 26). Ingo Plag also goes back to the notion of "conversion" and the question of the "presence of a zero-morph" while broaching truncation again and introducing "extended exponence" (p. 23) to show that morphemes are discontinuous (p. 24). As far as monomorphemic words like "prefer" are concerned, according to him, morphology should be viewed independently of etymology. Several pages, which are devoted to verbs and "their nominalizing suffix[es]" (p. 26), feature references to the literature on the subject, which leads the author to favour "a gradient view of morphological complexity" (p. 27) as suggested by Laurie Bauer, Rochelle Lieber and Ingo Plag in *The Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology* [2013]. The statement "It can thus be argued that government is morphologically less complex than for example, assessment or improvement whose phonological and semantic behavior is fully predictable from the morphemes that make up these words" (p. 27) is intriguing since you may feel that it is precisely the opposite: is not *government* more complex in fact since one of its pronunciations, /'gʌvmFnt/, is less predictable just like its pointing to "the people who govern" and not to the "action or result of governing", as in the other two nouns quoted?

20 The study of the complementary distribution of adjectival suffixes *-al* and *-ar* and of the "morpho-phonological alternations" (p. 30) is instructive. When zooming in on the prefix *un-*, you will learn about the existence of three prefixes: the de-adjectival,

denominal and deverbal one, and about the restrictions that apply (p. 31-35). The notion of complementarity then proves useful and the word-formation rule that is suggested can only be a tentative one at that stage: as the author remarks, “the task of the morphologist would be to find out more about the exact nature of the restrictions mentioned in the rules” (p. 36). For instance, the *-th* suffix does not make it possible to create new words through the process known in linguistics as “analogy” (p. 37). In back-formation, words are analogically derived by deleting a suffix (or supposed suffix)” as with the verb *edit* which was derived from the noun *editor* (p. 38). And in the case of multiple affixation (p. 39), parasynthetic forms may be encountered such as *decaffeinate* (p. 41).

21 Regarding the statement “the verb interview does not mean ‘view between’ but something like ‘have a (formal) conversation’” (p. 21), one could remark that originally people were supposed to see each other to be able to talk together before the introduction of technical devices that enable users to communicate with each other or with one another from a distance. Page 21, the distinction between “phonetic” and “phonological” forms should have been explained to those of the readers who are students. Page 31, the phrase “the hypothesis is falsified” (p. 31) might have been worded with the help of the adjective “false” instead, as in “results that could potentially falsify the initial hypotheses” (p. 43) where the meaning rather seems to be that of the verbs to contradict or to undermine. In the key to exercise 2.5 on pages 205-206, it could have been added that semantically speaking both *ingenious* and *indifferent* differ from all the other adjectives on the list because they are not the antonyms of *different* or **genious.*

22 When it comes to phonology, the transcription [ʌnhÆpq] with *j* as exponent at the end (p. 21) is not the usual IPA one, neither is that of fall vs. fell ([ɔ] [illegible] [ɛ]) (p. 23) where the IPA symbols should have been /ɔ:/ and /e/. And ought not the definite article <the> in isolation have been transcribed as /'ði:/ instead of [ði] (p. 28)? Ingo Plag also declares that in the verb *explain* “the first syllable of the base is pronounced [ɛk] instead of [qk]” (p. 29), but in Jones’s pronouncing dictionary for instance, we can find both transcriptions: /qk'spleqn/ and /ek'spleqn/. The sentence “the insertion of [F] with words ending in [t] and [d] (mended, attempted) can be analyzed as a case of dissimilation” (p. 29) is odd considering that the usual pronunciation of <-ed> in those words is /qd/. The definition “One of the two allomorphs occurs when a consonant follows, the other when a vowel follows” (p. 28) is problematic because it should have read: “when a consonant sound / when a vowel sound follows”. Otherwise how would it be possible to account for such examples as “the university”, where the definite article is pronounced /ðF/ and “a union” where it is not <an> which is used, /j/ being the first sound that is heard and a consonant one at that, although in spelling both words start with a vowel? I can also mention the uncommon wording of the phrase “for + verb in -ING” in the sentence “Use tree diagrams for representing the structure…” (p. 43) instead of the usual infinitive “to represent”, which expresses a goal.

4.3. Chapter 3

23 The phrase “the mental Lexicon”, which is introduced and defined page in Chapter 1, is an interesting one: it is eye-catching and raises several questions. For instance, to what extent is it different from what we usually conceive of as the lexicon? The notion of

"productivity", of a word-formation rule especially, leads Ingo Plag to focus on the affix: what are the mechanisms that determine whether an affix is productive or not? The distinction between "possible and actual words" (p. 45) based on the study of "semantically transparent forms" (p. 46), whose meaning is predictable, implies examining some counter-examples like *knowledgeable* and *probable* (p. 47) which do not respectively mean "can be knowledged" and "can be probed". Concerning "complex words in the lexicon" (p. 47), it is stimulating to see how the brain processes them, which allows for "psycholinguistic arguments" (p. 51), and to factor in the role played by "frequency of occurrence".

24 Scrutinizing the measure of productivity and the factors that come into play in the process involves analyzing neologisms, hapaxes and "extent of use" as defined in 1993 by Harald R. Baayen in *On Frequency, Transparency and Productivity* (p. 54). In so doing, the author should have established a clearer distinction between "neologisms", "new words" and "hapaxes" although he states page 54 that "a hapax legomenon [...] could [...] simply be a rare word of the language (instead of a newly coined derivative) or some weird ad-hoc invention by an imaginative speaker" (p. 55) and a few pages later that "a new word is created to give a name to a new concept or thing" (p. 59). A few concrete examples given from the outset pages 54-55 would have made the demonstration more effective. The restrictions to productivity that pertain to phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics may be influenced by usage-based factors too. Homonymy or synonymy blocking (p. 63) is related to "the principle of ambiguity avoidance" (p. 63), which is why Ingo Plag presents "type-blocking and token-blocking" as defined in 1988 by Franz Rainer in *Towards a Theory of Blocking*, although he does not agree on the former notion (p. 67).

25 As far as the style of writing is concerned, it is strange to see the recurring use of the for + -ING phrase in "For illustrating the frequencies of derived words in a language corpus, let us..." (p. 50). The expression "in short" could have been used in "Hapax legomena (or hapaxes for short)" (p. 54). Page 66, a question mark has been added before the word *decentness* whereas pages 64-65 it is not the case, which is a little confusing because the status of this noun might seem uncertain to some readers. The nouns *discoursiveness* and *discoursivity* (p. 67) should have been spelt *discursiveness* and *discursivity*.

4.4. Chapter 4

26 The question of knowing whether an affix is "a bound or free morpheme" is answered thanks to the example of compounds, which implies the distinction between an affix and a bound root. The latter term is here more precisely defined than in Chapter 1, as "neoclassical elements", also called "combining forms", are introduced in detail (p. 72). According to Ingo Plag, they should be considered to be compounds and not "cases of affixation". You will learn more about the large databases available to researchers and the 'Advanced search' options on the OED website with the example of <-ment> (p. 73-77). The general properties of English affixation, be they phonological, morphological or semantic, are investigated with the example of the Latinate affixes as compared to those of Germanic origin. The chapters on prosodic structure are a little more complex to grasp although it might interest you to know more about the differences between the non-native suffixes, which tend to be vowel-initial, and the

native ones, which tend to be consonant-initial (p. 79). An in-depth presentation of nominal (p. 87), verbal (p. 92), adjectival (p. 94) and adverbial suffixes (p. 97) follows, which has required extensive research, like the following review of prefixes. Yet, instead of devoting one paragraph or more to each of these affixes, it might have been a good idea to present them in a series of tables. Readers could have compared them at a glance and would have been able to memorize them more easily. The layout is thus intended for specialists rather than for students who just want to check an affix or two.

27 The acceptations provided for the adjectives *economic* vs. *economical* are *profitable* vs. *money-saving* (p. 96), but the former also has the meaning of "related to economics". As far as the *-ive* suffix is concerned (p. 97), about which Ingo Plag writes that "some forms feature the variant -ative without an existing verb in -ate: argumentative quantitative, representative", the exception *preventative* might have been added. Page 99, *-im*, *-il* and *-ir* should have been included in the paragraph about *-in* because among the examples mentioned are the adjectives *implausible*, *illegal* and *irregular*. Page 100, *-ir* should have featured in the paragraph on *non-* because of the example of *irrational*. The transcription [lɛss] (p. 72) for *less* does not follow the IPA rules, neither do those of *obscene* and *obscenity*, obsc[i]ne, obsc[ɛ]nity, (p. 92) or of *produce*, [djus] (p. 97), but these are a consequence of the author's choice, as quoted above.

4.5. Chapter 5

28 This chapter deals with "non-affixational word-formation processes" like conversion, truncated names, *-y* diminutives, clippings, blends, abbreviations and acronyms (p. 106). The first question is that of the "directionality" of conversion between verb and noun, which is taken up from a previous chapter. Ingo Plag refers to the history of language to show that derived words are generally semantically more complex than their bases "since affixes normally add a certain meaning to the meaning of the base" (p. 107). It is appropriate to mention that the frequency of occurrence is lower for derived words but as far as "ring" is concerned page 107, the semantics of "rang" could have been detailed line 2 in the column entitled "meaning". The role of inflection and, notably in the case of phrasal verbs, of stress is studied at length (p. 108), but for clarity's sake it might have been better to mention a "particle" instead of a "preposition" in column 3b on the very same page. The topic of "conversion or zero-affixation or the overt analogue criterion" (Gerald Sanders [1988:160-161]) is then broached by Ingo Plag, who says that there is no basis for "the assumption of a zero-affix" (p. 111), insisting that conversion should be viewed as "non-affixational" (p. 112). According to him, this process is morphological and not syntactic except in adjectives notably used when referring to "persons collectively" (p. 114). An exception such as **the pretty* might have been on the list drawn up page 113, to compare it to *the beautiful* for instance, which does not imply a class of people.

29 The author then expands on prosodic morphology, which was already introduced in Chapter 4, to examine truncated names as well as *-y* diminutives and clippings from a phonological point of view (p. 115-120). Clipped compounds also known as blends, whose shapes are "crucially constrained by prosodic categories" (p. 122), are subject to three types of restrictions: syllable structure, size and stress. The chapter, which makes good reading, ends with abbreviations and acronyms, both categories being better-known to the general reader (p. 124), although "the question of whether abbreviations

are new lexemes or simply new surface forms, i.e. allomorphs, of the same lexeme" is more complex. According to Ingo Plag, the abbreviation differs from the base word semantically speaking because it has a connotation that is related to a social meaning as we can see in START and SALT. That is why he asserts that abbreviations can be markers of social identity.

4.6. Chapter 6

30 This chapter is devoted to the ways of recognizing compounds, compounding being defined by the author as "the most productive type of word-formation process in English", but also as "the most controversial one in terms of its linguistic analysis" (p. 131). Compounds are not always made up of two words only, yet it is demonstrated that it is generally possible to analyze polymorphemic words as "hierarchical structures involving binary (i.e. two-member) subelements". The property of recursivity (p. 133) is useful when dealing with compounds, each being "a word that consists of two elements, the first of which is either a root, a word or a phrase, the second of which is either a root or a word" (p. 134). A possible classification is based on the syntactic nature of the head, which determines the major properties of a compound: it can be a noun, a verb or an adjective. What is stimulating too is the notion of semantic head to be found either inside the compound in the case of an "endocentric compound" or outside it in the case of an "exocentric compound" as well as the mention of "canonical and non-canonical compounds" suggested by Laurie Bauer (p. 135). The "coordinative compounds" as Laurie Bauer calls them, which may be "exceptions to the binarity constraint" are divided into three classes: "appositional, additive or compromise compounds" (p. 140). You are provided with keys to interpreting and analyzing nominal compounds thanks to the linguistic notion of argument: Ingo Plag believes that in argumentative compounds, the left element is an argument of the head (p. 143). He is convinced that:

> the interpretation of compounds depends on the possible conceptual and semantic properties of the nouns involved and how these properties can be related to create compositional meaning in compounds. (p. 144)

31 With noun-noun compounds, the interpretation depends on "the argument structure of the head, the semantics of the two nouns, the possible conceptual relationship between the two nouns, and on the surrounding discourse" (p. 145). Stress in adjectival, verbal and neoclassical compounds, especially in relation to informativity (p. 148), is also detailed as well as the special case of "triconstituent compounds" (p. 149) before the problem of compounding as pertaining to syntax or morphology is tackled.

4.7. Chapter 7

32 This chapter is much more abstract so it is rather intended for specialists who would like to check whether an overall theory of word-formation is possible (p. 162), its criteria being according to Ingo Plag "falsifiability", "internal consistency", "elegance", "explicitness" and "empirical adequacy" (p. 163). He says it could be built around "the interaction of phonology and morphology", "the ordering of affixes in multiply affixed words" along with "the form and nature of word-formation rules" (p. 163). That is how he comes to define *degemination* (p. 164) and in the context of generative grammar, to ponder the theories of "lexical phonology" and "stratal phonology". He is particularly

interested in the ways an affix might be selected by a base so that "base-driven" or "affix-driven restrictions" can be specified (p. 172). Morphological complexity can be construed with reference to Jennifer Hay as "a psycholinguistically real notion which heavily relies on the segmentability of affixes", compared to other theories which are founded exclusively on "structural distributional evidence" (p. 173). Four theories are hinted at in relation to "the form and nature of word-formation rules": the morpheme-based approach, the word-based approach, analogy – as in *dieselgate* which is modelled on *Watergate* – and *Naive Discriminative Learning*. According to Ingo Plag, the first one is "especially suited for the analysis of affixational morphology but there are problems with non-affixational processes" (p. 181). The second one has a lot in common with it as it also stems from the belief that "words are created by applying some abstract patterns instead of deriving them directly on the basis of other words" (p. 185). When dealing with analogy, more examples could have been provided page 187 especially to illustrate Royal Skousen and Thereon Stanford's 2007 theory. In the fourth one, which "is based on a well-established theory of learning from cognitive psychology" (p. 188), there are no morphemes and no morphological boundaries. This is where the author gets even more technical so it might be a little difficult for students to follow.

4.8. Answer Key to Exercises

33 In the Answer Key to Exercises, we might wonder why on page 200 Ingo Plag writes that "Considering the meaning of *slow* vs. *slowly*, *aggressive* vs. *aggressively*, for example, there is no difference in meaning observable" when we know that the adjective refers to the state of something or someone while the adverb usually refers to the manner of doing something. Page 206, instead of "fill the gaps", the usual phrase "fill in the blanks" might have been used. Page 210, the stress has been forgotten on the verb *absolutize* which is quite rare. Page 215, the example of *choir* with /kw/ for <ch> could have been taken into account since it contradicts the assertion according to which "<ch> is always pronounced [k]" though other examples like *church* have been given below to illustrate the pronunciation [tʃ]. Page 217, UFO has been transcribed as [jufoʊ] and [juɛfoʊ] and not in IPA as /ˌjuːefˈfʊ/. Page 225, no comma features after 2 in 2000 dollars and page 226 *Dar.wi.ni.a.ni.sm* sounds odd given that the usual term is *Darwinism*.

5. Remarks

34 Although we have to keep in mind that the author does not always choose much when it comes to editing a book, a larger font would have been easier on the eyes, especially as the ink is quite pale and the paper not that white. A blacker shade of ink would have made our reading a lot more comfortable while the text would have looked less compact if lines had been left between paragraphs.

35 On page xv, you will find a list of "Abbreviations and Notational Conventions", where it is a little confusing to notice that V is the abbreviation of "verb or vowel" while V refers to "the extent of use" defined by Harald R. Baayen as we later learn page 53. Three different symbols might have been preferable, for instance Vb for verb, V for vowel, and E for extent of use. The same goes for P, which stands for "productivity" and for "prepositional", while "word" is symbolized by "Wd" in "prosodic word, PrWd" but by "W" in "word-formation rule, WFR". Why not use the same symbol for that

keyword? It would have made the abbreviations clearer and more consistent while their use might have been systematized throughout the book, thus enabling readers to memorize them more easily. It would also have become useless to remind them of the author's choices, for instance page 5 where you can read "(fish brackets are used to indicate spellings, i.e. letters)", or page 6 "(note that the asterisk indicates impossible words, i.e. words that are not formed in accordance with the morphological rules of the language in question)" and page 8 "(throughout the book I will use phonetic transcriptions as given in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)", etc. Although the aim is to make everything clear to readers who have skipped page xv, such repetitions or information provided in passing may seem superfluous to those who have not. The use of square brackets for phonetic representation instead of the conventional slashes surrounding IPA symbols is uncommon.

6. Strong points

36 The author is very didactic so "novices" will certainly find a wealth of resources in *Word-Formation in English*. The keywords are defined at every step and temporary definitions are completed in subsequent chapters so that the student can choose to read one part of the book independently of the others or in the succession Ingo Plag has opted for. The introductory paragraphs and concluding summaries help you memorize content very quickly as well as the numerous templates, tables and graphs.

37 The great asset of the book is the user-oriented approach it reflects: it is particularly intended for intermediate and advanced students, who can apply what they have learned in the very interesting exercises to which a very clear and detailed key has been provided. After perusing *Word-Formation in English*, they will inevitably become more proficient at linguistics, especially morphology, and will have gleaned a lot of suggestions for future research topics in the field.

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